

Translation Precision

Generalizing Study Findings to Different
Population Groups

Introduction to Group Differences

- Racial and ethnic group differences (as well as other group differences) may exist in the structure and measurement of mental health and physical health constructs
- Veteran and non-veteran cultural differences in measurement outcomes may exist as well

Characteristics Related to Group Differences

- Each group has its own set of cultural characteristics consisting of values, norms, attitudes, and expectancies
- Each group faces different levels of social inequities
- Substantial differences related to physical health and mental health outcomes have been observed across different racial and ethnic groups

Measurement Outcomes Related to Group Differences

- Instruments developed and tested in one population may show evidence of low reliability when used in another population
- Bias can occur through cross-cultural differences in the interpretations of the meaning of concepts and of items used to measure constructs. For example, different population groups may define terms such as “overweight” differently

Construct Meaning May Vary Across Groups

- It may be unrealistic to assume that concepts can be measured in the same way for all groups of people
- Differential item functioning could affect analytic results related to the overall factor structure of constructs in different racial and ethnic groups

Flawed Measurement Leads to Flawed Conclusions

- Lack of generalizability of study data could lead to flawed conclusions and lack of appropriate treatment

17 Questions to Answer

- Several important questions must be answered prior to selecting a measurement instrument for use in a particular study.
- Please see the attached document labeled “17 Questions Related to Instrument Selection” for a listing of these questions
- Questions Related to Instrument Selection
(Adapted from McDowell and Newell, 1996)

**Take Me
There**